

# Linda Lawson

## Indiana State Representative, District 1



Summer, 2001

Dear Friends:

The 2001 long session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended with the passage of a new state budget and several other important pieces of legislation. I am pleased we completed our work on time in a bipartisan manner.

The new two-year state budget includes increased funding for education, CHOICE and other important programs while avoiding a general tax increase. The budget also includes funding for several important local projects that are detailed inside this newsletter.

We passed several other laws that will benefit our state in a variety of areas, including health care, education, crime, election reform and environmental protection. We made improvements to our license branch operations and passed legislation that will protect consumers from annoying telephone calls with the establishment of a do-not-call list. I have described many of these new laws in the next few pages.

In addition, you will find a map of our new legislative district. We are required to redraw the district boundaries every 10 years due to population shifts. I welcome those of you who are new to the district and look forward to working with you in the coming months to make Indiana a better place to live.

Please contact my office if you have additional concerns or questions about state government. You may e-mail me at [H1@ai.org](mailto:H1@ai.org) or call toll-free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

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# New budget increases school support, local development

Going into the 2001 legislative session, many observers felt that a sluggish economy would make it difficult to enact a biennial state budget without either passing a general tax increase or cutting funding for critical areas like public education. However, the budget bill that became law continues our record of avoiding general tax increases, while providing additional state support to our schools, health care and local projects.

The final version of House Enrolled Act 1001 enables the state to increase support for public schools across Indiana by an average of 3.5 percent each of the next two fiscal years, with minimum guarantees built in to help schools avoid cutting programs and personnel. Funding for higher education was increased by an average of 3.2 percent each year.

## Services and local development

The budget includes additional funding for the CHOICE program that provides in-home care services for the elderly and disabled, as well as Build Indiana Fund support for research and technology, community wastewater and drinking water grants, airport development and improvements to voting systems.

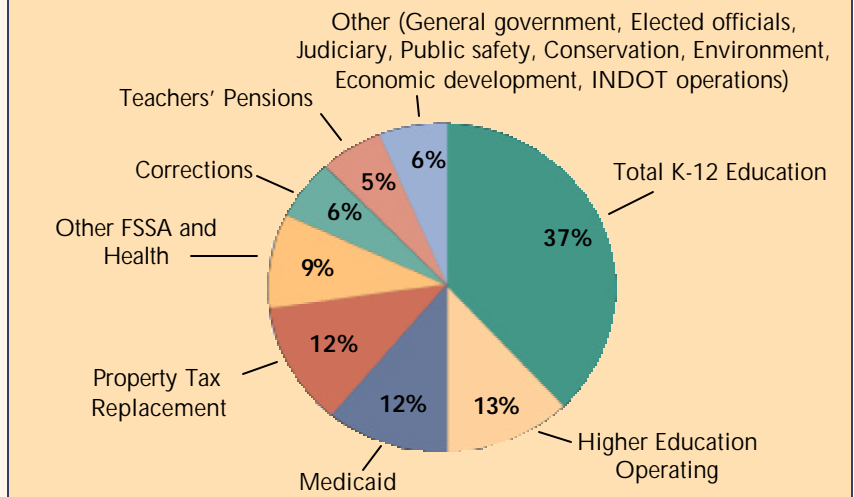
## Tax relief

It was disappointing that we were unable to provide the levels of tax relief that were included in past state budgets, but I am pleased that we were able to extend the life of the homestead credit at 10 percent and maintain the earned income tax credit that assists working families on lower incomes.

Businesses and farms will receive an income tax credit on personal property beginning in 2003, and mobile homes have been changed to be treated as real property with similar deductions. The budget bill continues to fund a statewide property tax relief program that now takes about 16 percent off all property taxes. When coupled with the 10 percent homestead credit, that translates to savings of around 26 percent.

A bill the size of the budget does not contain everything I would like, but considering the fiscal restraints facing legislators going into the 2001 session, I feel this budget is a major accomplishment.

## Spending highlights from the 2001-2003 budget



## Lawson's domestic violence bill and independent contractor bill become law



REP. LAWSON AT WORK IN THE HOUSE CHAMBER.

I am extremely proud of authoring House Enrolled Act 1874, which contains several provisions intended to help domestic violence victims, encourage law enforcement in their protection of victims, and strengthen penalties for domestic violence offenders.

The law waives the prepayment of filing fees for a protective order, mandates that protective orders issued by other states and Indian governments be enforced in Indiana, and grants immunity to law enforcement officers who register or enforce a legitimate protective order. The law also makes domestic violence in the presence or within hearing of a child an aggravating factor that justifies an increased term of imprisonment for offenders.

Statistics show that children witness almost 75 percent of domestic violence attacks, and those children are 1,500 percent more likely to be victims of abuse themselves. Additionally, 63 percent of young men between the ages of 11 and 20 who are incarcerated for homicide have killed their mothers' abusers. This law is an effort to stop the cycle of violence that plagues the lives of so many in our state.

Another bill which became law this year aims to decrease the number of independent contractors who avoid paying for and providing worker's compensation insurance by obtaining an exemption from the Worker's Compensation Board. The law increases the required documentation and the filing fee for the exemption, and makes it a Class D felony for a contractor to knowingly and intentionally cause or assist employees to file an affidavit of exemption.

## Build Indiana Funds go to District 1

Since the Hoosier Lottery began in 1989, a portion of the earnings has gone to local development. Listed below is money awarded to our district.

Hammond Fraternal Order of Police: Police Officer Memorial—\$100,000

Haven House, Inc.: building renovation—\$60,000

Millennium Project: landscaping/entrance construction—\$40,000

Clark High School: computer/technology—\$20,000

Northwest Family Services: classroom education equipment/computers—\$20,000

Towle Opera House: renovation—\$50,000

Pulaski Park improvements—\$50,000

Korean Veteran's Memorial—\$13,000

Hammond Boys and Girls Club—\$27,000

Hammond Parks and Recreation: youth golf course—\$50,000

Ivy Tech Foundation: Community Health Center—\$25,000

Highland Boys Baseball—\$20,000

Bethany Child Development Center—\$25,000



REP. LAWSON DISCUSSES LEGISLATION WITH SPEAKER JOHN GREGG (D - SANDBORN).

## New curfew law and other kids' issues

Indiana's curfew law for juveniles was ruled unconstitutional last year, but House Enrolled Act 1084 makes changes in the law to conform with recent cases. These changes enable youth to stay out past the curfew if they are engaged in certain activities protected by federal and state laws, including school and religious functions.

### New kindergarten date

Children who turn five years of age by July 1 will be able to

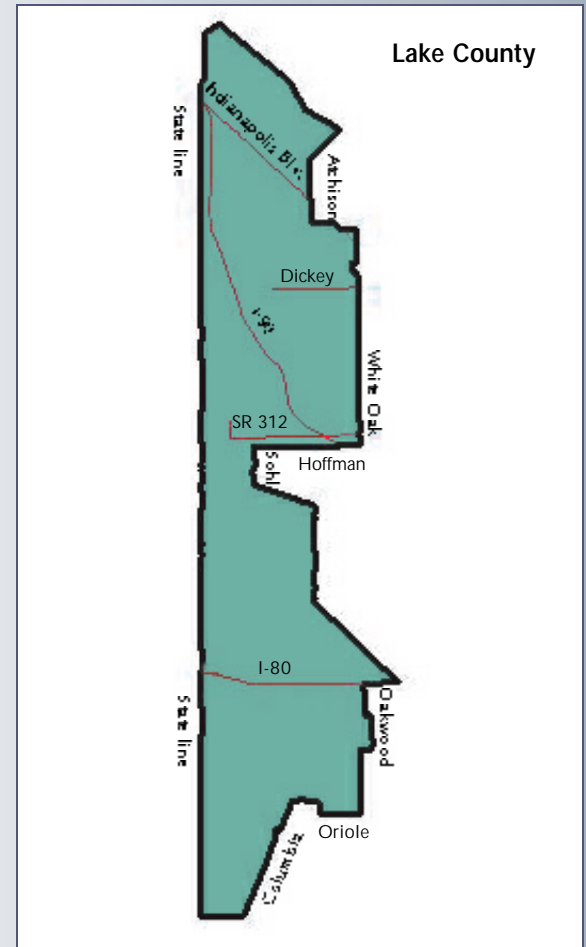
attend kindergarten classes that fall through a provision included in the state budget. Previously, a child had to be five by June 1.

### Principal evaluations

Local schools will be able to access materials that provide instruction on resolving conflicts in the classroom, thanks to House Enrolled Act 1971. The bill also enables principals to be evaluated on criteria apart from student scores on the ISTEP exam.



## The new look of District 1



During this year's session you may have heard about redistricting in the news. After each census, the Indiana General Assembly is required by law to redraw House, Senate and Congressional district boundaries according to population changes.

Each district must have 60,000 people, which means that as the population moves to or from various parts of the state, boundaries shift to reflect that change. District boundaries are very complicated, and it took months of effort and debate among legislators to reach a consensus. In the end, however, I feel that the district lines we have drawn are as fair as possible.

For both the current members and those new to the district, I look forward to serving you. Please contact me if you have questions about the district or any other matters.



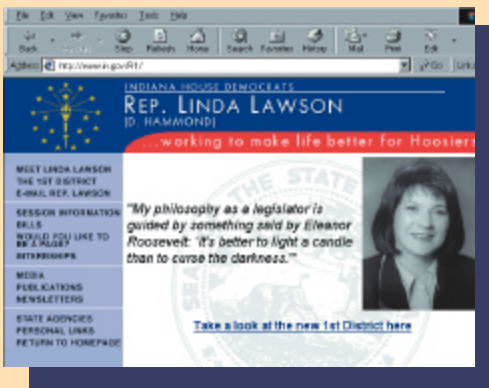


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## Privacy from telemarketers and election reform

Stay informed about these  
and other issues online with  
Representative Lawson



Web: [www.in.gov/R1](http://www.in.gov/R1)

E-mail: [H1@ai.org](mailto:H1@ai.org)

In 2001, lawmakers took steps to help reduce the interruption of telemarketers calling you at home. Through House Enrolled Act 1222, you will be able to have your name placed on a do-not-call list that will **prohibit most solicitors from contacting you via the telephone**. To be placed on the list, contact the Office of the Indiana Attorney General about the **Telephone Privacy List** at 1-888-834-9969.

In the wake of the confusion that took place in the presidential election in Florida last fall, lawmakers in Indiana moved quickly to enact reforms that will change the way we handle elections here.

Senate Enrolled Act 268 gives counties the ability to enter into agreements with the state to purchase **upgraded voting equipment**. This allows counties to take

advantage of the state's ability to purchase large amounts of equipment and materials at discounted prices. Funds contained in the biennial state budget will help the state provide 50 percent matching grants to further reduce those costs. The same legislation also **eliminates the use of punch-card voting** in future elections.

Through provisions contained in House Enrolled Act 1510, the state has moved closer to improving voter registration in Indiana. The Indiana Election Division will make a **voter registration form available on the Internet** that people can download, fill out and mail in to be processed. The legislation also strives to update lists of eligible voters by removing names of people who are deceased and convicted felons who are in prison.